21 Hutchinson E-4,5 (1950-1951) 1957 SO11 Bahia Brazilians SO11

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Sugar cane has proved to grow especially well with the combination of warmth, rain, and massapê, and the soil has been producing the same crop for almost four hundred years. The area of massapê is sharply defined, for at its farthest edges the land rises to the regions of sandy scrub forest and desert which characterize what has been called the "other northeast"[2] or the sertão.

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The surface of the sugar-Recôncavo is characterized by rolling fields cut by shallow valleys. Although the massapê is not subject to erosion, the other soils, where exposed, are. During the rainy winter season much damage is done, especially to the roads, which for the most part follow the non-massapê soils. Underneath the soil of the sugar-Recôncavo there are recently discovered oil deposits. The quantity of oil has not yet been determined, for the explorations are still going on. However, the national government has already begun to exploit the oil, which is close to the surface. Under Brazilian law, subsoil resources belong to the national government and not to the owner of the lands. As a result there has been a small-scale invasion of petroleum workers on the privately owned lands of the sugar-cane planters. To date, this has not interrupted the agricultural routine to any great extent, at least not in Vila Recôncavo. In Conselho (see map of community), where the drilling was first started, the government bought the land from the individuals and the sugar mill corporation owning it and has turned once green fields of sugar cane into bare fields, spotted here and there with oil wells. The former agriculturalists have had to leave the area or become laborers in the oil camps and refinery.

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The Recôncavo is one of the most densely populated regions in Brazil. It is an area of 6,500 square kilometers, with a population of 683,000 in 1940, distributed in 14 counties including the capital. It has an average density of 106 inhabitants per square kilometer,[3] in comparison with the average density of the state of Bahia, which is 7 persons per square kilometer, and with the national average of 5 persons per square kilometer.[4] It must be remembered that these figures include

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2. Preston James, Latin America (New York, 1942), p. 411.
3. Aroldo de Azevedo, "Recôncavo da Bahia," Revista da Universidade de São Paulo, I (1950), 14.
4. T. Lynn Smith, Brazil (Baton Rouge, 1947), p. 131.

health post, and the bar have refrigerators. On Saturday and Sunday nights there is a movie, the same film being shown both nights.

There are only two roads leading out of the town. One goes northwest to Centro, following a ridge which leads along the river through a section of poor soil devoted to gardens of manioc and bananas. On horseback it is a trip of approximately two hours to Centro. The other road leads northeast into the sugar-cane fields and to the sugar factory and then continues east, eventually leading to the oil fields of Conselho and out onto the major Bahian artery from Salvador to the interior city of Feira de Santana. The journey from Vila Recôncavo to the main highway takes about four hours on horseback. Although the local road, made during the empire and part of the public domain, is called the "royal road," it is really only one-track dirt. In the summer it affords a hard surface because the hot sun bakes the earth, but during the winter it turns into a river of mud. During the rainy season the layer of clay underneath the topsoil holds the water, turning the roads into practically impassable quagmires. The situation becomes even worse just after the rains end and the surface dries, for when a man or animal breaks through the dried surface and sinks down into the clay the suction created is difficult to overcome. A trip which during the summer takes half an hour on horseback may take from three to four hours in the winter. The horse must pick and choose each step with the utmost care. During these months travel is extremely fatiguing for horses and mules, and frequent changes of mount are necessary. During this part of the year one avoids making an inland journey if possible, and keeps to the waterways.

From Usina to Conselho (see map of community), the road has been recently coated with oil, sand, and broken stone by the Conselho Nacional de Petroleo in an attempt to make an all-weather route. The surfacing has proved fairly satisfactory but very expensive. Although this highway follows the old "royal road," it is owned by the conselho. When a plantation owner of the area wishes to pass over it in his car or jeep, he must secure permission from the conselho office in Salvador. Nevertheless, in the past year this road has proved a boon to the plantation owners, who can now go back and forth to their homes in the city in about two hours at almost any time of the year, eliminating the long journey by horseback or canoe to the town of Vila Recôncavo to take the boat. The

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travel from the city to the plantations by car at almost any season of the year. It is a two-hour trip, considerably more comfortable than the old system of travel by boat and on horseback. In addition, the roads have made it possible for the planters to transport their cane more efficiently, using trucks and tractor-drawn wagons. Along with this, the refinery has led to greater supplies of diesel oil, gasoline, and kerosene, so that it is no longer necessary to transport these items from the city at great cost and delay.

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The planters have also profited in another manner. Petrobrás invaded the cane fields in its search of oil. It fenced small areas where it drilled and constructed storage tanks, and it took out of cane production a good deal of land for roads and installations. Recently a basis has been reached for paying the planters in a satisfactory manner for the use of the lands. As a result each planter whose land is partially occupied now receives an annual cash payment based on what the occupied land could produce. As yet no arrangements have been made for the landowners to participate in the profits of Petrobrás, since all subsoil riches belong to the nation, and therefore in this case to Petrobrás.

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There has been little social intercourse between the planters and the personnel of Petrobrás, either in the rural area or in the city of Salvador. From time to time the higher echelon employees of Petrobras are invited to larger parties given by the planters, and in return the planters are sometimes invited to parties at the refinery. But the plantation society is so closed and so firmly based on family relationships that it is difficult to maintain steady social relations with newcomers. In addition, the engineers and other specialists of the oil industry are principally oriented toward the capital city, and there is no serious attempt made to establish social relationships with the planters.

The sugar-cane workers for their part are so definitely plantation-oriented that they seek little diversion among the new oil workers. The unmarried field workers of Petrobrás who might be expected to establish relationships with the rural population seldom do so. They live in a fenced barracks area which immediately gives the impression of a group cut off from the rest of society. When they do seek entertainment they go as a rule to the factory nucleus, or to the town of Vila Recôncavo, or to the nearby town of Milagres.

Politically, this influx of new workers has had little in-